



Harris & Ewing

### WOODROW WILSON

"For I tell you, my fellow citizens, I can predict with absolute certainty that within another generation there will be another world war if the nations of the world do not concert the method by which to prevent it."—Woodrow Wilson, Omaha, September 8, 1919.

# *The Wilson Era*

## *Years of War and After*

1917-1923

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BY JOSEPHUS DANIELS

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, 1913-1921

"These things I saw and part of them I was."  
—Virgil

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TO

MY WIFE, MY BEST COUNSELLOR

ADDIE WORTH BAGLEY DANIELS

1869-1943

"The truest and tenderest and purest wife ever man was blessed with. To have such a love is the one blessing, in comparison of which all earthly joy is of no value; and to think of her is to praise God."

## FOREWORD

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"But now, how trowe ye? Such a fantasye  
Fell me to mynd, that ay me thought the bell  
Said to me, 'Tell on, man quhat the befell' "

—THE KINGIS QUAIR

THE WOODROW WILSON ERA, covering a dozen of the most momentous years in the life of the American republic, may be said to have begun when Wilson responded to the call to doff the scholastic cap and gown and enter the arena of politics in 1910. It moved into high gear as the legislation known as the New Freedom cut athwart old narrowing traditions, dethroned privilege, gave labor its Magna Charta, opened new highways for all the people, and made preparation for victorious participation in the war Wilson sought to avert. It reached its climax when all the free nations approved "Wilson's League of Nations" pact at Versailles, following such world manifestations of hero worship of Woodrow Wilson as were never before given mortal man by the peoples of the whole earth.

In a former volume, *The Wilson Era—Years of Peace, 1910-1917*, I undertook to give some of the sidelights through the period up to Wilson's second inauguration, when the world shook with the echoes of the feet of marching men in the most terrible war that had ever challenged civilization. The present volume, *The Wilson Era—Years of War and After, 1917-1923*, covers the passing of this country from neutrality to war, Wilson's successful master strategy in the direction of the successful fighting of three million Americans under arms, his statesmanship manifested in the discharge of difficult domestic tasks, his consecrated and heroic fight for the peace for which he led the youth into war, his falling with the flag of peace pressed to his heart as his sacrifice made him the great casualty of the holocaust, and his dying in supreme confidence that the Covenant he had brought home would one day bless mankind and destroy forever the curse of war.

In the period treated, I held the portfolio of Secretary of the Navy and, with the aid and stimulation of the most efficient and loyal

associates with whom a public official was ever blessed, directed the operation of the web-footed branch of war-making; was a member of the regular Cabinet, the War Cabinet, the Council of National Defense, the Committee of Public Information, which gave out news instead of censoring it, and various committees looking to shipping, war supplies, health, and the protection of the men in the armed forces from the harpies that appear in war days. When, "broken at the wheel," Wilson retired in semi-invalidism, the close ties that had existed between us in official life continued. This personal relation puts upon me the compulsion of revealing the story behind the scenes.

If, in the interest of making history speak the truth, some self-placed auras, undeserved, are removed, and there follows the deflation of pumped-up reputations, I can truly say that no line has been written in malice. Privileged to enjoy the confidence of the noble man who was the great central figure and light-fountain of the high days of war as the prelude to peace, I have felt it a solemn responsibility, as the last surviving member of his original Cabinet, to give the inside story as his great leadership unfolded, from the day he summoned the people to a war against war until he died in the holy passion of undeviating consecration to lasting peace. In this duty I have sought to correct some of the assumptions in autobiographies and biographies written to exalt Wilson's trusted associates who, owing all to him, failed him in the supreme hour.

These sidelights of history reveal Wilson as one of the greatest minds of his age, with the noblest passion for unselfish public service and rarest devotion to loyal associates whom by adoption he had tried and proved. They make him no plaster saint, for upon rare occasion he could and did lose his temper exhibiting what Dr. Eliot called "a fierce and unlovely side," which the Harvard president attributed to "most reformers and pioneering folk."

The Wilson Era marked the rejuvenation of the Navy, which had been allowed to lapse to a poor second when Wilson was inaugurated. He declared for: "The most adequate Navy in the world," and Congress provided for such a Navy in its Three-Year Program. Any picture of the Wilson days that does not depict the carrying out of Wilson's Naval policy would be incomplete. Naturally, from the Navy Conning Tower I have set down in permanent form the highlights with some detail, the story of Navy administration with illus-

trative incidents, stressing its great achievements in World War I. With less detail I have shown the decisive contribution the American Army made on the Western Front where the enemy was vanquished.

There is no attempt to write the full history of those epic days. Volume after volume has made that story familiar. I have essayed rather as a reporter "taking notes" to record the sidelights of that era, with emphasis on what "me befell" as Wilson's Secretary of the Navy and personal and political friend.

"A chiel's amang ye takin' notes  
And, faith, he'll prent it"—

I have sought to retell incidents that illustrate the central figure of the Era with pen pictures and just appraisal of a few of the great and near-great at home and abroad who figured at the Peace Conference and in the stormy days that preceded and followed that first peace assize of all the nations of the earth

This is no chronological history. It is a personal narrative based on my observation and some participation in the events of those years. What I have written are my recollections, aided by my sketchy diary with borrowings from others.

In this labor of love and duty I have tried to tell the story of an epic era. All the while I have felt that I was "looking back to glory."

Josephus Daniels

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*Part One*

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WOODROW WILSON



## UNDERSTANDING WOODROW WILSON

---

THERE WAS NO touch of the mysterious or of the mystic about Woodrow Wilson. He was the easiest man to comprehend and understand of all the presidents who have occupied the White House.

When he was alive there were those who would say, "Yes, he is gifted beyond all others in felicity of expression and he knows how to fight, but he is an enigma."

"He lives in a sublimated atmosphere, lacks good-fellowship, and moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform," said others.

When the "ashes to ashes" was said, the same thought was expressed by a score of writers. Some called him "the inexplicable," the "great unknown," the "scholar who emerged from the cloister to make dramatic plays," the "self-contained idealist who lived in a water-tight compartment apart from his fellows," and the "man whose inner life and thought were impenetrable."

As "Wilson died without having revealed himself, he goes in history, the unknown and unknowable to his generation," was one of the final estimates a Washington correspondent made of the dead President.

Those near Wilson never had the least trouble in understanding him perfectly. Those who knew him only in his words and deeds and public utterances were unerring in their appraisal. Why did his intimates never doubt what he would do, and why did the great body of the people read his transparent public life, while the myth of a not-understandable Wilson was created and grew like the fabled gourd watered by sedulous cultivation?

### ALWAYS MEANT WHAT HE SAID

The answer is easy. It has been so rare for a public man to be utterly frank and genuine, to mean wholly what he says, and to carry out his public pledges regardless of all obstacles, that when a new kind of simplicity and directness appeared in a leader, the Washington politicians looked for some reservation he had made for escape

from his frank avowals. "If a diplomat says 'Yes,' he means 'No.' If he says 'No,' he means 'Perhaps.'" Hence the accepted notion that other public men besides diplomats use words to conceal thought. Wilson did not understand such use of words. If he did, he did not so employ them. Never was man freer from misleading anyone as to his real meaning and intention.

"This one thing I do," was his self-given mandate. He said he had "a single-track mind." Certainly there was no misunderstanding him. You might disagree with him, and you doubtless did at times. You might deplore his going at things without circumlocution. He never learned that in public business the longest way around is the nearest way through. That's why the idea grew up that Wilson was a "queer" man. He was "queer" to those who expect a President to use public office to pay private debts, to sacrifice the public good to reward a friend, and to those who boast of what is often both a virtue and a failing, that they "never go back on a friend," which means giving that friend something belonging to the public, which it is not for the public good he should have.

Most of the ills of public business come from paying private debts with public office. It is a very natural feeling for a chief executive to reward his supporters by giving them office. He is a wise executive who surrounds himself with men of like conviction, men who have a passion of coöperation to carry out the policies upon which they are agreed. But when some political associate is given an office or contract or concession or lease as a "plum" or an "apricot" (see the Teapot Dome investigation) by a President, that chief executive is an embezzler of power. Are these hard words? If so, the time has come when they need to be said. Even more, there is demand that the Woodrow Wilson principle of risking the love of friends, and of being called ungrateful, rather than making public office a matter of personal friendships, should become the Eleventh Commandment.

#### SOME WHO FAILED TO "UNDERSTAND"

It was not only in Washington that the myth of "a mysterious Wilson" was entertained. It was found wherever there was difficulty in recognizing the exact meaning of words. Have you observed how difficult it is to make people believe that you mean what you say, even your best friends, when they are trying to circumvent you

or persuade you to do something different from your announced purpose?

"We cannot understand him," said the pedants and worshippers of rich donors at Princeton. They stated the truth backward. They understood him perfectly. That was the trouble with the man. He determined to make Princeton a democratic institution, to produce scholars who would feel the compulsion that men with education must be servants of mankind. Could anything be plainer? But your scholastic worshippers at the shrine of the dollar knew that what Wilson proposed was condemnation of themselves. That was what hurt. Wrapped in an academic gown, wishing an aristocratic institution, they were ready to trade the character of an institution of learning for large gifts. Their plan was to give lip service to Wilson's democratic creed while practicing the policy of conserving what they called "the responsible elements of society." It was because Wilson pulled the mask off educational snobbishness that they hated him. It was not because they didn't "understand" him. It was because men "understood" all too well that if his policy succeeded they would stand exposed for what they were—trucklers and flunkies to rich donors.

When Wilson declared, "I have dedicated every power there is within me to bring the colleges that I have anything to do with to an absolutely democratic regeneration of spirit," all hats were in the air! That was a fine sentence, and those who were far from being democratic in spirit said, "The parents of Princeton boys will rejoice that Princeton has a President with such true American spirit." There was no dissent. But when Wilson undertook to put the doctrine in practice, there went up a great cry: "We cannot understand him." When he wished to replace social clubs with study homes, he was proclaimed worse than an enigma. Couldn't understand? Of course not. He was doing exactly what he said he would do. Those who wanted Princeton to be "the most charming Country Club in the world" moaned, "We cannot understand Wilson."

#### GAVE THE BOSSES NO PLEDGES

"We cannot understand this man Wilson," said former Senator Jim Smith and the other political bosses of New Jersey. "He will not play the game." They said, "See here, we took him up. We nomi-

nated him for Governor of New Jersey and elected him. Then he throws us down. We cannot understand such a man."

Again, the political bosses, like the pedagogical snobs, were putting the cart before the horse. It was not that they did not understand him. It was that they understood him too well for their purposes. When the suggestion came to Wilson of becoming the Democratic candidate for Governor of New Jersey, he said he would accept if it implied no promises or pledges. The speaker of the organization who placed Wilson in nomination said Wilson would accept "without any private obligations or undertakings whatever." Later, when he defeated the bosses who were trying to overrule the mandate of the primary, the machine politicians wailed, "We cannot understand this man Wilson." That wasn't their complaint. It was that they understood him too well as they landed on the pavement. It suited their purpose to disguise his disapproval of their adherence to machine methods by attributing something "strange and mysterious" to Wilson.

Then Wilson came to Washington. There was some perturbation on the part of the Old Guard in his party. His Staunton speech on December 26 gave them cold shivers. That was increased when, the day after his inauguration, Wilson announced that he would give no audience to those desiring office. Shades of the immortals! Had not the great Lincoln bemoaned the necessity of giving up much time to talking to office-seekers? Here was the schoolmaster in the White House locking the doors against men desiring public office. They united in one jeremiad, "We cannot understand this man." That wasn't what they meant. They understood only too well. He was doing something they did not like. They couldn't help themselves. They did not wish to cry out the condemnation they felt. So they added some snow to the enlarging snowball myth that Wilson did things nobody could make out.

In all the precedent-breaking days in Washington, the corridors whispered that the man in the White House had such a surprising manner of approach and such different ways of doing things that a glossary was needed to enable the folks to get what he was driving at. This reached a crescendo when, discarding a custom of over a century, he went up to the Capitol and delivered his message in person. "Actually, he seems to think he can look us in the eye and hypnotize us to do his will," said a Congressman—one who admitted that he could comprehend what Wilson was driving at.

Wasn't Wilson a Democrat? Was he not the heir of Jefferson, the original Democrat? Had not Jefferson discarded the practice of speaking his recommendations to Congress established by Washington? Had not Jefferson's party criticized even the "Father of His Country" for aping royalty and delivering a message "from the throne"? Was all this Jeffersonian precedent to be scrapped by the New Jersey schoolmaster? They couldn't understand.

#### WASHINGTON PUZZLED WILSON

Wilson set about breaking precedents in Washington and was proclaimed "a queer person." On the other hand, he was mystified about Washington. He could not understand it. "Every time I wish to be perfectly natural," he said, "and every time I do the things that I want to do and which seem all right, I am told they are the very things I must not do." But if he did not understand Washington, nobody heard about that. Everybody heard that Washington could not "understand" Wilson. Though a golfer, he did not wish to join the most exclusive country club. What was the matter with the man? Was there a screw loose? Other presidents had even felt honored to come into the most aristocratic club and putt with its members. He must be a sort of inexplicable man who preferred to stay by himself, or select his own friends, rather than mingle with the best society of the national capital. The job of getting this into the heads of social Washington would require a surgical operation. The White House had a man who wasn't like other folks. What sort of creature was he anyhow? They didn't give it up. No, they talked about it over their tea. That was in the days when "Wilson—That's All," taken with ice and the accompaniments, was the only thing they could understand with a Wilson in it. And they haven't quit talking to this day about the golf player who didn't select his associates and appointees from his companions in the golf games. Couldn't they "understand" him? Rather they understood him perfectly. It did not flatter them, and it was more consoling to their self-esteem to discuss the "strange" mind of this new occupant of the White House.

For a century the people of Washington looked to the long-drawn-out days when a tariff was in the making as a harvest time. People who wished to see that the schedules did not fail to help their particular business were in the habit of moving over to Washington. They came with retainers in 1913, as formerly. It was the quadrennial

onslaught on the Capital. Hotels were filled, champagne popped, there were dinners galore, and a merry time. This army of lobbyists—they called themselves by a higher sounding name—had hardly become warm in their nests before Wilson issued an order for them to leave Washington. In some way they have never yet understood, he had a roster of the whole outfit. He knew their whole program, could tell what interests they had come to serve and what members of Congress they had approached and were entertaining. It was a sad day for the hotels and the taxis and the social swim, when that queer man in the White House said, "Go."

What did Wilson know? He knew their names, their aims, their methods, and their employers. One thing is known. The tariff lobby hurried from Washington in posthaste. Did they tell those back home what Wilson knew and why they had so suddenly changed their plans? They did not. They added themselves to the poison squad which increased the army spreading the report far and near that "You can't understand Wilson," and they added: "A mysterious man in the White House is a dangerous man." For once they were right. The man was "dangerous" to those who wished to write tariff schedules to put money in their own pockets.

When currency legislation was up, Wilson was beyond the understanding of the big bankers, who had been accustomed to exercise great influence in all government fiscal matters. They thought the bankers ought to have representation in the Federal Reserve Board, since they put up the money. Their position seemed plausible. Wilson told them that the new system was to control and regulate banks, and he could not consent for men who were going to be regulated to be themselves the regulators. Did they "understand" him? Only too well. They understood him so well that they organized to fight the Federal Reserve legislation. Senator Aldrich was summoned from his retirement to show that Mr. Wilson's proposed currency legislation was "an important step toward changing the Government from a democracy to an autocracy." It was a conflict of giants, though not as sensational as the big battle over the National Bank when Andrew Jackson and Nicholas Biddle locked horns. The country understood Wilson, if the opponents of currency reform had failed to do so.

They couldn't "understand" Wilson all through the long and difficult Mexican situation, though his course was as plain as a pikestaff.

This was particularly true of those, like Henry Watterson, who issued a demand that every foot of land from the Rio Grande to the Panama Canal should be brought under the American flag. Exploiters who held Díaz's concessions of his country's patrimony most of all pretended not to understand Wilson. Others were mystified. To be sure, there was wide division of opinion in America as to the wisdom of Wilson's program of "watchful waiting." But no excuse for misunderstanding. He stated it a score of times with the greatest clarity, perhaps never more succinctly than when he said, "So long as the power of recognition rests with me the Government of the United States will refuse to extend the hand of welcome to any one who obtains power in a sister republic by treachery and violence." He made that declaration early in 1913 and never altered his position. And yet the air was full of, "We cannot understand Wilson's Mexican policy."

#### WILSON'S COURSE IN THE WAR

The European war offered the widest door to the inability to "understand" Wilson. There was never any doubt of his position from the assassination in Serbia to the Armistice. It was: Neutrality just so long as it was consistent with the protection of American rights and the preservation of the just rights of humanity. Those zealous to enter the war and those eager to help the Central Empire failed to "understand" his consistent and difficult course of action. Their own partisanship blinded them, not Wilson's plain course. He navigated between Scylla and Charybdis with a firm hand. He was never uncertain of the port toward which he was steering. If others were doubtful, it was made plain in the note of May 13, 1915, to the Imperial German Government that he would not "omit any word or any act necessary," and in the resignation of Bryan because the Secretary of State felt that Wilson's vigorous policy might lead to war.

And yet in America there were those who said they couldn't "understand" his plain language. Great Britain didn't seem to "understand." Even Ambassador Walter Page, an authority in the use of good English, permitted his zeal for the United States to hurry and enter the war to becloud his mind. Because of Wilson's patience, Germany had taken the cue and acted as if it did not "understand." For weary months the Germans proceeded as if they

had not read the "omit no word or act," and could not comprehend the clear import of those words in the *Lusitania* note:

"The Government of the United States is contending for something much greater than mere rights of property or privileges of commerce. It is contending for nothing less high and sacred than the rights of humanity, which every Government honors itself in respecting and which no Government is justified in resigning in behalf of those under its care and authority."

There was plenty of room for disagreement as to whether Wilson did not exercise too much patience. Some believed he should have asked Congress to declare war sooner. But there was no possibility of doubt that war would follow unless the Imperial German Government kept the pledges it made. If people did not "understand," it was because they deliberately shut their eyes to the fixed policy of President Wilson. They refused to look through plain glass. It was not that Wilson was not understandable. It was that he was not taken at his word.

The Armistice was signed upon the acceptance by the Allies and the Central Government of Wilson's Fourteen Points with his additions in two other addresses. It was as plain as it could possibly be. And yet when Wilson reached Paris there were assertions by some that they didn't "understand" him when he contended that peace should be made according to the faith pledged in the acceptance of his terms. The British Admiralty claimed they didn't "understand" "Freedom of the Seas." They understood only too well that it would end any one country's being the "mistress of the seas." Even in the body of the American Peace Commission there was voiced a lack of ability to comprehend that the League of Nations must be bound up in the Treaty, one and inseparable. But Wilson made it plain, and later in a way that did not admit of any misunderstanding.

The lack-of-understanding myth persisted when Wilson returned home and made the fight for the Covenant. He had accepted the Taft, Root, and Hughes suggestions, and they had been incorporated. Wilson made his attitude so plain on the League that the wayfaring man might read him aright. He did not believe any reservations were needed. If, however, friends of the measure wished to add interpretive amendments, he had no objection.

They did not "understand" Wilson when, in 1919, in the face of



the warning of his physician that the strain of speaking for the League from Washington to the Golden Gate might cost him his life, without affectation he calmly said, "I don't care if I die the next minute after the Treaty is ratified." They couldn't "understand" that no man truly believes in a cause he would not die for.

They couldn't "understand" Wilson when as an inspired prophet he said at Omaha:

"I can predict with absolute certainty that within another generation there will be another world war if the nations of the world do not concert the method by which to prevent it."

And the dim of vision couldn't "understand" that he was able to pierce the veil and look a quarter of a century into the future as he said in an address at San Diego:

"I do not hesitate to say that the war we have just been through, though it was shot through with terror of every kind, is not to be compared with the war we would have to face next time. . . . What the Germans used were toys as compared with what would be used in the next war."

When the Senate adopted thirteen reservations, which Wilson declared were "nullifications," he was dead set against them. Still there were those who were continually telling us—in 1941 they saw his prophecies of Nazi frightfulness fulfilled—that they could not "understand" Wilson. The critics and the doubters and the blind of that period could not gaze through a prism and see the colors. It is hard to give "understanding" to those who will not "understand."

For twenty-five years the League, lacking the practical vision of Wilson, failed to understand and carry out its great purpose and permitted the imperialistic aspirations of some members, and the stupidity of others to prevent action while the Axis powers armed for World War II. Worse than that: There sprang up—even in America—apologists for the Nazis, who invented the fiction that the peace of Versailles was a hard one and that because of its harshness, the blame of Germany's re-arming was laid at the door of Wilson. That propaganda of misunderstanding poured water on Germany's war wheel. André Tardieu truly said that "the Versailles Treaty was a hundred thousand times better than the way it was carried out."

Lastly they could not then "understand" the uplifting faith of "the lame lion of S. Street" as, sensing that the "old machine has broken down," he was able to say to me, "Do not trouble about the things we have fought for. They are sure to prevail. And I will make this concession to Providence—it may come in a better way than we provided."

But in 1945 there came the tragic reaping of what had been sown by those who though "having eyes, see not," in millions of casualties in World War II, because a former American generation did not "understand" and did not follow Woodrow Wilson into the League of Nations.

They "understand" now that the United Nations, highly resolved to make a sure way to the peace Wilson envisioned and fashioned at Versailles, signed the Covenant of World Peace at San Francisco on June 26, 1945. "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." The whole world today has come to hold the view expressed by Jan Christiaan Smuts, who, after the Versailles Treaty, said, "It was not Wilson who failed but humanity itself. . . . Americans of the future will yet proudly and gratefully rank him with Washington and Lincoln and his fame will have a more universal significance than theirs."

*Part Two*

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THE WAR CLOUDS GATHER

THE IDES OF MARCH

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IT WAS A very different world which confronted Woodrow Wilson on March 4, 1917, as he took his second oath of office, from the one of 1913 when he summoned all forward-looking men to his side. Then there was not a war cloud as big as a man's hand on the world horizon. In 1913 it was domestic problems that pressed for solution. In his first term these had been solved.

War clouds lowered as Wilson quietly took the oath in the President's Room in the Capitol on Sunday, March 4, and repeated it in the presence of a great gathering of people at the Capitol on Monday. Then as in 1913 the oath was administered to the Presbyterian elder as chief executive by the Catholic chief justice.

Behind lay the victories of peace, the building of the New Freedom. Wilson had secured a new Magna Charta for labor, achieved sound policies of taxation, created a system of finance far removed from Wall Street, provided credit for agriculture and business, set up agencies for ending monopoly, brought into being a great Navy and Merchant Marine—setting the chart for free enterprise and prosperity. Would these reforms be lost in the maelstrom of war? He feared a nation could not put its strength into war and keep its head level. Could free assembly and free speech survive? These fears and questions pressed upon him as his carriage passed 'down Pennsylvania Avenue.

Roof tops bristled with guns and a cordon of police made a hollow square around the carriage of President and Mrs. Wilson. Secret Service men were vigilant. The inaugural address did not partake of the martial spirit. While there pervaded a feeling that war could not be avoided, Wilson addressed many members of Congress who were hoping against hope that the cup of conflict would not be pressed to their lips. On that day, if a vote had been taken, a fourth of the Congressmen would not have voted for a declaration of war. "Will Wilson be borne along upon the rising tide and make a war declaration?" was the question. His hearers listened intently for the

answer. Some hoped to hear the call to battle. Others prayed that a way might be found to keep us free of the holocaust. While others cheered, the sense of the troubled days ahead made the President serious. Oppressed as he was with these reflections, the holiday appearance along the avenue seemed incongruous. And I shared these forebodings, for my mind was centered on hastening preparations to end U-boat warfare, then at its height. The tone of the address heartened many who still hoped the war could be averted, when Wilson said that if America remained true to herself the "shadows that lie dark upon our path will soon be dispelled and we shall walk with the light all about us." Did he still believe we could keep out of war in the hope that Germany would not commit the "overt act"? Or was he relying upon Ambassador Page's earlier assurance that the entrance of the United States into the war would in itself insure peace without the employment of large armed bodies of American troops?

There was no hint in his inaugural of foreboding or doubt as he declared, "Nothing will alter our thought and our purpose, whether in war or peace." He declared for freedom of the seas and the equality of all nations; he foreshadowed the League of Nations when he said, "Peace cannot securely or justly rest upon an armed balance of power." He called for unity, pledging that "Nothing will alter our thought and purpose to maintain American rights upon the seas," even if "we may be drawn on by circumstances to a more immediate association with the great struggle itself." People saw resolve in his declaration: "This is no time for retrospect. It is rather a time to speak our thoughts and purposes concerning the present and the immediate future." Briefly he stressed American principles of the foundation of peace, and gave a measure of hope to those still unwilling to accept war, as he spoke in tones that were almost convincing to himself and those who hung on his words.

Though the day opened bright, as it wore on, a raw and chilly wind made it very different from the halcyon day in 1913 which seemed an augury of domestic tranquillity. I was never so nearly frozen stiff, standing with the President and Mrs. Wilson and the Cabinet reviewing the long parade. I recall to this day the rigor of the biting wind and how I rushed to a boiling hot bath to recover from the chill. But if the President felt the cold as others did, there was no evidence of such feeling. He stood until the end of the line

passed, believing if men could march and salute, he could do no less than return the salute of those he feared might be making their last greeting before they stood on the firing line. Was the chill in the air a portent of the coldest winter (1917-1918) the world had known since the weather bureau recorded the temperature, and a prophecy of the icy battlefields that stretched before the armed forces? If the wind was icy, the people were hot with resentment toward Germany for its threat to return to unrestricted U-boat warfare; their indignation flamed over Zimmerman's offer to Mexico "to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona"; and they were still seething with wrath because a senatorial filibuster against the bill to authorize the arming of merchant ships by "a little group of willful men" had caused Wilson to declare that they had "rendered this government helpless and contemptible."

#### THE VALLEY OF DECISION

Following his inaugural address, Wilson lived in what Ray Standard Baker said was the "Valley of Decision." For more than a week, far from well, he remained aloof in his private quarters; the usual Cabinet meetings were not held, and he saw only a few callers. On the evening of March 9, when I called to discuss plans for arming merchant ships, I never saw him so grave. He said he would approve the plans. But, in a letter sent me later, he emphasized that no announcement of arming the ships was to be made. Urging secrecy, he wrote: "I would be very much obliged if you would give the most emphatic orders that no part of any of this is to be given even the least publicity. I should feel justified in ordering a court-martial for disobedience to such orders."

He talked solemnly of what war might imply. Was he still hoping the cup would not have to be drained? I think so. That opinion is strengthened by the view of Ambassador Gerard, who, leaving the White House, said, "Wilson was in a most serious mood. He said he had done everything to preserve peace and even yet he hoped that the Germans would abandon their ruthless submarine war." Further proof of Wilson's seeking to find a way of escape is seen in the statement of Frank Cobb, editor of the *New York World*, upon whom Wilson often depended for counsel. A few hours before he took the plunge, he and Cobb had a long and heart-to-heart talk in the White House. Cobb relates that Wilson, sad beyond thought, told him

up arms against America will swing from one of those 500,000 lamp-posts.'

"Lansing reported that rumors had reached him that 500 German Reservists had gone to Mexico to make trouble. McAdoo said he had heard that 250 Japanese had gone to Mexico to make munitions. Wilson (W. B.), who evidently took no stock in these rumors, dryly commented: 'It is strange that Germany and Japan are both going to Mexico, seeing that they are at war with each other.'"

#### PROPAGANDA REBUKED BY WILSON

Before the final plunge was taken, Wilson rebuked Lane one day for believing unsupported reports and wishing to act upon them. My Diary records:

"Hardly had the Cabinet members taken their seats when Lane said he had heard that the wives of American Consuls on leaving Germany had been stripped naked and subjected to other gross indignities. Lansing, who should have informed the Cabinet earlier if such outrages had been committed, answered as unfeelingly as if it were not a shocking thing, that the report was true. He volunteered nothing else and when asked for more particulars, since his evidence was vague, said he would have to examine the reports to find the evidence."

#### MEMBERS OF CABINET HOT

Before we entered the war the President and the Cabinet boiled over because the British carried American ships and cargoes, bound to neutral countries, into their ports. That they were willing to pay for the contents did not lessen the condemnation. Writing to Colonel House, Secretary Lane voiced the feeling:

"You would be interested, I think, in hearing some of the discussion around the Cabinet table. There isn't a man in the Cabinet who has a drop of German blood in his veins, I guess. Two of us were born under the British flag. I have two cousins in the British Army, and Mrs. Lane has three. The most of us are Scotch in our ancestry, and yet each day that we meet we boil over somewhat at the foolish manner in which England acts. Can it be that she is trying to take advantage of the war to hamper our trade?"

As the war went on, German ruthlessness was so much worse than British interference with our trade—the one murdered our

seamen while the other hit our pockets—that the sentiment expressed by Lane changed into alliance with Britain against the common enemy. From that time on (April 6, 1917), American and British seamen revived the spirit of sea-captains whom Nelson called his Band of Brothers.

#### COLLEGE MEN EAGER FOR WAR

The collegians, as a rule, sensed that the United States ought to enter the war sooner than others. From the institutions of learning came the earliest advocacy of a declaration of war. That sentiment was voiced in the Cabinet by Secretary Houston, who went from the presidency of two universities to become Secretary of Agriculture. He was more influenced by the Harvard point of view than by that of agriculture. I recall that when the question of the attitude of the country toward war was under discussion Houston read the following extract from a letter (March, 1917) from Edwin A. Alderman, President of the University of Virginia, devoted friend of Wilson, who had advised the Trustees of that institution to select Alderman as its President:

"I believe it to be our duty, as a nation now, as a matter of self-interest, as a matter of national honour, as a matter of future world influence, and as a matter of keeping quick and vital the national spirit and the national conscience, to go to war with Germany, unless the present control of the German Government sees fit to cease its methods of crime and aggression.

"Of course, we are at war with Germany, or rather, they are at war with us. You know my admiration and confidence and affection for the President. In the first place, his knowledge of the real facts goes far beyond anything we outsiders can appreciate; and, in the second place, he has great power of analysis, calmness of judgment, coolness of mind, and a great background of knowledge and understanding. I never permit myself to criticize him, even as a friend, because I have a feeling that in the end it will be shown that he is right. I can understand his aversion to carrying a nation into war that does not want to be carried into war. But he never said a truer thing than when he said that no great war could hereafter occur without our participation. In my judgment that applies to 1917 as well as to some future date. . . .

"It is time now, I believe, to sound the tocsin, and no man can sound it, if he so wills, so effectively as the President."



## THE DAY OF DECISION

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SO FAR AS I can discover, Tuesday, March 20, 1917, is not found in war chronologies as the Day of Decision. That was, however, the time of the great decision that carried the United States into World War I. Eleven days earlier, President Wilson had called Congress to meet in special session on April 16 to "receive such communications as may be made by the Executive." The debate in the Cabinet was whether, in view of the "overt act" having been committed by German U-boats, the Congress should not be convened earlier and asked to make a declaration that a state of war existed between our country and the Imperial German Government. In the Cabinet meeting on March 20, Wilson sketched the steps our country had taken to avert war while giving protection to Americans in their right to sail the seas. He was disinclined to make the final break. With a sort of detachment, after he had finished, he invited the views of his Cabinet associates.

It was a supreme moment. Some of us, fully in harmony with the President's patient and long-successful efforts to protect American rights by peaceful means, had at last, like himself, lost hope of world and national safety without resort to war. Others, approving of steps taken, had earlier wished entrance into the struggle. It is interesting, even when the matter is one of life and death, as was this determination, to observe how ten men with the same objective will differ in the presentation of their views or the reasons for their conclusions. No two of the Cabinet on that day gave expression to precisely the same reasons, or rather, I should say, aside from the impelling reason, each had been influenced by some incident or argument he presented. But all were convinced that the character of the warfare being waged by the Central Powers could no longer be tolerated and that no course was open but for America to throw the weight of its great power into the scales against Germany.

Only once did the President interrupt a Cabinet member. It was when Burleson—no war advocate in these trying months—exhibited



*Top*, Wilson's first Cabinet. Around the table, clockwise, are President Wilson, and Messrs. McAdoo, McReynolds, Daniels, Houston, W. B. Wilson, Redfield, Lane, Burleson, Garrison, and Bryan. *Center*, the war Cabinet. Lansing has succeeded Bryan; Gregory has succeeded McReynolds; Baker has succeeded Garrison. *Bottom*, the last Cabinet, with Colby succeeding Lansing, Payne succeeding Lane, Houston succeeding Carter Glass, who took McAdoo's place, Palmer succeeding Gregory, Meredith succeeding Houston, and Alexander succeeding Redfield.



#### PRESIDENT WILSON AND HIS WAR ADVISERS

*Standing, left to right, Herbert Hoover, Food Commissioner; Edward N. Hurley, chairman Shipping Board; Vance McCormick, chairman War Trade Board; Harry A. Garfield, Fuel Commissioner. Sitting, left to right, Benedict Crowell, Assistant Secretary of War, representing Baker, absent at the war front; William G. McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury, President Wilson, Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy; Bernard M. Baruch, chairman of the War Industries Board (Underwood and Underwood).*

a sheaf of telegrams saying that many people were demanding a declaration of war. Wilson said with much feeling, "We are not governed and cannot be rushed into action by public opinion. I want to be right whether it is popular or not."

#### WE ARE AT WAR NOW

"You and Burleson and Wilson have not spoken, Daniels," said the President turning to us as the others had urged a war declaration. Burleson said, "We are at war. I am in favor of calling Congress at the earliest moment." W. B. Wilson said, "I have reluctantly made up my mind that action must be taken. We are at war. Congress should be called to declare that it exists."

I answered that in view of Germany's broken promise to cease sinking American ships and assumption of the right to lay off the lanes of the sea, I saw no course except to declare war to preserve the rights dearest to the cherished principles of the American people and to uphold our national honor. I referred to the fact that two days before, on March 18, word came that the American steamships *Memphis*, *Vigilancia*, and *Illinois* had gone down under submarine attack, the *Vigilancia* without warning. I also stated that what had stung the sea-going men most was the Kaiser's assertion of the right to lay off the lanes of the sea, saying to the American sailors where they could voyage and what part of the ocean was *verboten*. That order sought to establish a war zone around Britain and France and Italy and sink any ship found in that zone. It was unthinkable that Americans who wished to go abroad should be confined to travel in those ships which had a certificate from the American Government that it carried no contraband. I added it was an insult that the Germans directed those ships to carry three alternate stripes of red and yellow, displaying at each mast a large insigne in white and red, with the added provision that such American ships should arrive on Sunday and depart on Wednesday under peril of being sunk by a U-boat. "No American proud of the doctrine of freedom of the seas could fail to resent the denial of that freedom." I added that I had hoped and prayed that the hour when war was our honorable portion would not come, but that the attitude of the Imperial German Government left us no other course. I gave my voice and vote for war after a long conflict that had torn me for months. It was my Gethsemane.

I wrote in my Diary that night:

“If the American people possessed television and a dictaphone and could have seen and heard the President as he spoke of the gravest issues our country had faced, they would have felt a confidence in him and an admiration which nothing else could have imparted. . . .”

#### DISCUSSION IN CABINET

During the frequent debates in the long days of neutrality, Lane and I had often clashed. He accused Baker and me of holding back. He believed, as secretaries of the military departments, we ought to have been the first to advocate retaliation. We both agreed with Woodrow Wilson, as did Secretary W. B. Wilson, Postmaster General Burleson, and Attorney General Gregory. In the long months of discussion in the Cabinet, we had stood with the President, six to five, against early participation while Lansing, McAdoo, Lane, Redfield, and Houston wished to declare war before the Germans repudiated their promise not to employ U-boats against our merchant ships. The others had urged earlier entrance into the war, but Lansing had made no open declaration. He had early signed vigorous notes demanding that Britain abandon its policy of preventing American ships' reaching neutral ports. Later I learned that these notes were written by Solicitor Cone Johnson. None of his colleagues suspected, as Lansing read vigorous demands on the British Government, that, as he said later in his Memoirs:

“In dealing with the British Government there was always in my mind the conviction that we would ultimately become an ally of Great Britain and that it would not do, therefore, to let our controversies reach a point where diplomatic controversies give place to action. . . .”

#### EXPECTATION NOT WELL FOUNDED

In the early days of March, Lane and Houston were intimate associates of Spring-Rice, British Ambassador, and Jusserand, the French Ambassador, and were in communication with Walter H. Page—our Ambassador to England. At the Cabinet meeting of the Day of Decision, March 20, Houston quoted the view of the French Ambassador that if we entered war there was no expectation that the United States would need to send an army to France. He quoted

Jusserand as saying what the French Ambassador had already said to me:

"I do not know whether you will enter the war or not, but if you do, we shall not expect you—and I am sure that I am speaking the sentiments of my government—to send any men to France except a detachment for sentimental reasons, to return the visit of Rochambeau. We shall want you to aid us mainly on the sea and with credits and supplies."

That oft expressed view of some Cabinet members who had for months favored a declaration of war was not shared by the Secretary of War or the Secretary of the Navy. Their view and that of the generals and admirals was that once we made a declaration of war, it would be our war and would demand millions of men and billions of dollars. Perhaps their joining Wilson in seeking to secure our rights without going to war was influenced by their knowledge that the French and British Ambassadors were more sentimental than practical. History proved that no mere "Lafayette we are here," or "Return the visit of Rochambeau"—gestures of friendship and a few men—could avail.

#### THEY WANTED TO SWAP JOBS

After a rather heated debate on the Day of Decision, as we went to the usual weekly Cabinet lunch, Lane proposed that he and I swap jobs and Baker change with Houston. I replied that he would have precipitated us into war before we were well enough prepared to insure victory. As a matter of fact, it is generally the officials and officers upon whom the chief responsibility will rest in case of war, who, understanding what war means, are more anxious to avert it than are civilians, who urge hurried entry. That was true in 1917-1918. It was true in the Spanish American War and in the War of the Sixties.

Secretary Houston, who was a master strategist (he had walked over part of the terrain over which Lee's army passed and had been a student of the Napoleonic Wars) laughingly said to Secretary Baker and me, "I admit that I am a military strategist of the first order."

#### WILSON SENSED GERMANS WOULD BLOW UP SHIPS

Late Saturday afternoon, March 24, the President and Mrs. Wilson called at the Navy Department. It was the first time Mrs. Wilson

had been there, and she was interested in the large and distinguished room occupied by the Secretary of the Navy. "This is the most beautiful office in Washington," she said.

The President told me he had been thinking about the interned German ships and had come to the conclusion that we should put Marines aboard to prevent German sabotage. He felt that the ships were now derelicts. Long before we entered the war, quite a number of German ships were interned in our waters. Some of our officers trusted the German officers and they were received socially by Naval and other families. I told the Chief of Operations that they ought to be kept under surveillance. "They are Naval officers, and officers of every nation can be trusted," he said.

V 73' M23 & N17

#### EXPLOSIVES LEFT ON GERMAN SHIPS

H6

At Philadelphia several interned ships were anchored at the Navy Yard. The officers and men were given the run of the city, and some of the officers were social favorites. A Philadelphian who did not trust the interned German officers told me that it was extremely dangerous to leave these ships with none but German crews aboard. Why? It would be easy to blow them up and do serious damage to the Navy Yard. I saw that it might mean danger, and I directed the recall of liberty granted German officers and the removal of all Germans from the ships. I did not trust them, particularly after the President's visit to me. When our officers went aboard the interned ships, without notice to any German officer or enlisted man, they found the Germans had left behind explosives so placed that the ships and a portion of the Navy Yard could easily be blown up. After that discovery at Philadelphia no more trust was placed in the so-called honor of German officer internees. 34345

#### A GERMAN LOTHARIO

In one Navy Base city where the German officers were welcomed into the homes of American officers, some were very agreeable. In one case the wife of an American officer became infatuated with a German officer. Her infatuation so possessed her that when the German officer was sent to Atlanta and held as a prisoner of war, she turned up in Atlanta to the humiliation of the Navy. That was the only case on record.

## A NORTH CAROLINA STORY

On her visit to the Navy Department Mrs. Wilson was much interested in a case containing the sword of John Paul Jones, which had been presented to him by Willie Jones, an early patriot of North Carolina and leader of the Jeffersonian party in that State. She was interested, and so was I, in a story the President told, which I am quoting from my Diary of that day:

"When Benedict Arnold was given a roving commission to destroy, he went South, met and talked with a man from North Carolina, who did not recognize Arnold.

" 'What,' asked Arnold, 'would the North Carolina people do to Arnold if they captured him?'

"The unsuspecting North Carolinian replied: 'They would cut off the leg injured when Arnold was bravely following Washington and give it honorable burial. Then they would hang the balance of the damn rascal.' "

"This story was apropos, as I pointed out to the President and Mrs. Wilson when they were looking at John Paul Jones's sword in a case in the Secretary of the Navy's office. It had been given by Willie Jones, foremost patriot of North Carolina, from whom John Paul took the name of Jones when he was in hiding. The sword had been presented to the Navy by Admiral Nicholson.

"Mrs. Wilson hangs on the President's stories and conversation with enthusiasm. 'Sweetheart,' he calls her."

## WILSON'S FORESIGHTEDNESS

Nothing escaped Wilson. He read all the dispatches from abroad and kept up with Army and Navy preparations. My Diary of March 6 records:

"The President called at the Navy Department to talk over arming ships and the danger of submarines in American waters and about bringing the fleet North. He thought in addition to arming ships we ought to have three motor boats on each ship to be lowered in smooth seas to hunt submarines. 'When in England,' he said, 'I saw the annual occasions when a shepherd would stand in a circle and by calls and whistles herd the sheep distant from him.' He drew a like parallel. It wasn't difficult to manage two but it was difficult with three. The submarine



would expect a boat on each side of the ship but the presence of the third boat would confuse it."

#### A WHITE HOUSE HUNCH

Deeply interested, Wilson, in the White House, would mull over the ways to meet the submarine menace and think out plans to outwit the U-boats. Then he would convey his plans to me, sometimes calling late in the afternoon at the Navy Department (he knew I was always there till time for a late dinner), or he would ask me to come to the White House. I would then communicate his views ("I am an amateur," he would always say by way of preface to his suggestions, many of which were adopted) to the Chief of Operations or the Navy Council and say, in Wilson's expression: "This is a White House hunch."

From my Diary of March 8, I quote:

"At night I had a message from Hoover at the White House saying Mrs. Wilson wished me to call. Upon my arrival she said she was a blind—that the President was declining to see anybody and that was why she called. He was suffering from a cold. After the exchange of greetings, we discussed arming ships. He wished it kept secret. Decided to arm ships. The Navy Department had prepared regulations in event we armed and I had sent them to him that afternoon. He suggested changes and particularly to omit: 'No ships shall go to the rescue of the ship attacked.' That seemed inhuman to the President. Upon returning, I called up Benson and Palmer, and Benson went that night to New York to see P. S. B. Franklin of American lines and arrange to have guns and armed guard put on all ships. He saw Franklin, who thought visit and search should be permitted outside of zone. Franklin called me up by telephone and wanted to know if he should arm the *Manchuria*, ready to sail."

#### NAVY TAKES OVER WIRELESS

It was decided that the Navy should take over all wireless stations operated in the interests of the Germans as well as those operated by Americans, and, at least for the war, make wireless a government monopoly. When I made that proposition Burleson said, "I serve notice that when communication becomes governmental, it must be under the Post Office Department." The President asked, "Is that a threat or a prophecy?" I answered, "It is a bluff or a boast."

## INSTRUCTIONS 'TO THE ARMED GUARD

On March 13, 1917, after consultation and exchange of letters with the President and the Secretary of State, I issued "Regulations Governing the Conduct of American Merchant Vessels on Which Armed Guards have Been Placed," beginning with the declaration that they were placed on vessels "for the sole purpose of defense against any unlawful acts of the submarines of Germany or any nation following the policy announced by Germany." Every possible situation was outlined in the twenty-eight sections of the instructions, including: "No offensive action outside the zones prescribed by Germany" unless the submarine is guilty of an unlawful act that jeopardizes the vessel, her passengers, or crew, or unless the submarine is submerged." I wrote the President, pointing out that the presence of the U. S. Navy personnel on merchant ships would probably be considered an act of war from the German viewpoint, but that Germany's note saying it would sink without warning justified the course we were taking. Some naval officers feared we were in danger of violating old-time rules of the sea, forgetting that rules that apply to surface craft could not be carried out against under-sea assassins.

## NAVY PREPARES FOR "FULL SPEED AHEAD"

I was engrossed in the early days of March with preparation for the eventuality of war. I announced publicly that if it became necessary the Navy would commandeer shipbuilding plants to expedite the construction of fighting ships; I held conferences with shipbuilders who had contracts and urged them to cut time for construction of swift motor boats for coast control; awarded contracts for sixteen non-rigid Navy dirigibles; placed orders for six scout cruisers and five other cruisers to be built at once in private yards; gave directions for the construction of one hundred submarine chasers and fifty destroyers; ordered construction of the *Idaho* to be rushed, and announced that the *New Mexico* would be completed in April. I gave myself day and night to conferences that made possible the policy of "Full Speed Ahead," when war was declared on April 6.

## WHO IS MR. BONE?

From my Diary of March 2:

"I dined with Burleson and we then went to the Senate to endeavor to secure an early vote on the postoffice bill. It contained a bone-dry provision and one authorizing the use of tubes for mail delivery in the big cities. Burleson, a consistent opponent of prohibition, didn't want the new tube or the dry provision (either). 'I really want Wilson to veto those provisions, but I have consented not to oppose them.' I wanted the bone-dry provision."

Everybody was talking about Bone Dry legislation. I met the Japanese Naval Attaché, and he asked, "Who is this Mr. Bone, who makes Washington Dry? He must be a very influential man."

DECLARATION OF WAR

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**A**PRIL 2, 1917, was to go into history as the highlight, not only of American entrance into war, but of an oration that stirred its distinguished audience to an enthusiasm that swept the country, though no radio enabled the people of the world to hear the voice of the orator. It was on that day—the hour not fixed—that the President was to go before Congress and ask a declaration of war.

In the afternoon as I was closing the daily press conference I looked up and saw President Wilson quietly sitting in one corner of the large room. I closed the conference, at which the correspondents had asked questions which could not be properly answered upon the eve of war. Unknown either to me or the correspondents, Wilson had listened to the exchange. He asked, "Do you have to go through this ordeal every day?" I replied, "Twice every day, but being a newspaper man, I am only taking some of my own medicine."

Wilson, his war message ready, and waiting a summons from Congress, called on me and then on the Secretary of State and the Secretary of War, all three offices being in the War, State and Navy building. Lansing advised a strong military force to guard the President going to and coming from the Capitol. Wilson, always irked by Secret Service or other guards, scoffed at Lansing's fears. However, as a measure of precaution, Baker provided a cavalry squadron and other armed protection that night.

## LIKE SAUL AMONG THE PROPHETS

On the floor of the House, seated in a half circle just in front of the Speaker, sat the Justices of the Supreme Court, the figure of Chief Justice White towering like Saul among the prophets. The presence of the distinguished Justices in the hall of the House of Representatives was unprecedented. But, for that matter, the occasion was without precedent. I observed that the Chief Justice seemed to be laboring to conceal his satisfaction that the hour had arrived for the declaration he had long believed to be inescapable. For months he had not

concealed his zeal for entrance into the war with the Allies. Shortly after English troops were in action in France he had said to one of my Cabinet colleagues: "I wish I were thirty years younger. I would go to Canada and volunteer." And he knew what war was, having as a youth shouldered a musket in the Confederate Army.

As Southerners saw his towering figure enter, they gave an old-time rebel yell that resounded through the chamber, and it was repeated when they saw him rise at the conclusion of Wilson's address and throw his hat to the ceiling as he led the cheering.

#### THE PRESIDENT COULD DO "NO OTHERWISE"

With my Cabinet colleagues I was early in my seat. Soon the Senate was received in the usual formal way, the members were in their seats, Vice President Marshall and Speaker Clark were standing expectant.

The hour for the arrival of President Wilson grew nearer. The clatter of the cavalry horses on the pavement could be heard, a regiment from Fort Myer escorting him from the White House to the Capitol. Every person jammed in the hall of the House stood as President Wilson entered the brilliant chamber. He was given a spontaneous and sustained ovation.

"The President of the United States," said the Speaker as Mr. Wilson ascended to the place appointed. As the echo of the gavel died away the distinguished company, hushed by appreciation of the solemn hour, resumed their seats. Any stranger would have chosen Wilson as the leader if he had looked down upon that gathering of the great. Erect, with stern sense of responsibility, his face marked by determination, with confidence born out of long battle before decision, there was a gravity and distinction in his bearing which made him the voice and inspiration of a great people about to embark on what he and his hearers alike regarded as a noble struggle. He looked inches taller in his immaculate dress. A spirit of serious apprehension of all that lay before him seemed to dwell upon his countenance. He was pale, for he had come to that moment through great travail of mind and heart. He bowed his thanks for the evidence that those present were ready to hold up his hands and go all the way with him even unto death. That consciousness of the unity of his countrymen imparted new faith and strength. His eyes took in the

scene, rested a moment on the faces of his Cabinet comrades, with knowledge of their affection and admiration, paused as the glamour of diplomatic and military uniforms gave color to the scene, and then rested for a brief period upon the gallery where encouragement and love beamed from his noble wife and his adoring daughters. From that intimate and reassuring glance, he turned to the manuscript he held in his hands and an air of calm and confidence settled upon him. He faced the Congress, which he was asking to join with him in a noble adventure. The spirit of the seer and prophet and fighter was upon him. He spoke clearly and solemnly as befitted the gravity of his recommendation. The great audience seemed hushed as the chosen leader, in sentences so vascular they would have bled if cut, recounted the tragic events which had culminated in the necessity for war. The spirit of the Covenanter flashed from his eyes as he proclaimed: "The world must be made safe for democracy." It was to be a war "without rancor and without selfish object" and without revenge. Why did he counsel war—why must we fight? He answered: "For democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world at last free."

The chamber breathed its approval and consecration. When he came to the climax: "There is one choice we cannot make, we are incapable of making. We will not choose the path of submission," all observed the tall and commanding and venerable Chief Justice rise to his feet—he looked ten feet high—and lead the cheering with which the chamber rang. As he applauded, his face moved convulsively and great tears rolled down his cheeks. There were not many dry eyes. The Chief Justice was not alone in giving vent to patriotic emotion.

The memorable address ended with the inspiring prayer, borrowed from the immortal Luther, as Wilson spoke for America "privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured"—

"God helping her, she can do no other."

The die had been cast. Four days later Congress declared that a state of war existed between the United States and the Imperial German Government. Soon the youth were hurrying to find glory

clearly the path of my duty, and I have made up my mind to walk it, if I go barefooted and alone. I have come to the undoubting conclusion that I should vote against this resolution. If I had a single doubt, I would with profoundest pleasure resolve it in favor of the view of the Administration and of a large majority of my colleagues, who have so recently honored me with their confidence. I know that I shall never criticize any Member for advocating this resolution. I concede—I feel—that he casts his vote in accordance with sincere conviction. I know that for my vote I shall be not only criticized, but denounced from one end of the country to the other. The whole yelping pack of defamers and revilers in the nation will at once be set upon my heels.”

He closed with these words, which he followed with deeds by leading in legislation to finance the war, thus showing his devotion to his country:

“I can conceive of a brave, loyal, devoted son of a father who contemplates a personal difficulty with another begging and persuading him to refrain, even condemning, and protesting in vain against his proposed step, but when the final word is spoken and blows are about to be given, taking off his coat and struggling with all of his soul and might in defense of that father.

“When this nation, as it doubtless will today, speaks the final word through the Congress, I trust I will be found in relation with my Government and my country emulating the example of that son.”

#### PAGE RETIRED UNDER CRITICISM

I had known that three of the best members of the House from North Carolina—Kitchin, Webb, and Robert Page—had been sweating blood over the question of going to war. They had stood with Wilson in his long attempt to preserve neutrality, but could not agree when he was impelled to ask a declaration of war. They walked on hot ploughshares. When the attitude of Page was made known to some of his constituents, a number telegraphed him that if he could not stand with Wilson, he ought to retire from Congress. These messages, one from his brother Henry, cut him to the quick, and he announced that he would not run for reelection in 1916 since some of his constituents felt so strongly about his attitude. When I heard he was taking that course I went to see him—he had

been a groomsman at our wedding and our wives were good friends. I told him that he ought to take the course Kitchin was taking—vote his convictions and remain in Congress where, as the most influential member of the Appropriations Committee, he could render great service. But he had already made his announcement. Having sworn to this, which I thought was to his own hurt, nothing could cause him to withdraw his announcement of his purpose to retire. The House lost one of its ablest members. The bitter telegrams to him showed the temper of the times. Afterwards, when there was need for the appointment of an able man at the head of the Farm Bank for the Carolinas, I asked the President to name Page, the fittest man for the position. He would not do so, saying that at a critical time Page had failed, adding, "Suppose all had done likewise in that critical period!"

#### WEBB DEFIES KITCHIN'S CRITICS

Though the House respected Kitchin, his attitude was strongly condemned by many. His mail was deluged with letters. "Go to Germany" was the type of not a few. Kitchin also got many letters of "Thank God for Claude Kitchin." He whipped one bitter critic. He seldom retorted in kind to critics, but on the train going home he heard a passenger who recognized him standing in the doorway, abusing him and saying, "Kitchin ought to be sent to Germany." Sensing that the man wished to be offensive, Kitchin seized his critic by the collar and shook him until he cried for quarter.

Immediately after his speech, some members, led by the dynamic Tom Heflin, demanded that Kitchin be deposed from the leadership of the House, to which he had been unanimously elected. Nothing came of it. Honorable E. Y. Webb of North Carolina, Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, later appointed Federal Judge, denounced the attempt to demote Kitchin and declared, "You can call your caucus, and while you are going to vote for the war resolution, we defy you to harm Claude Kitchin or attempt to remove him as our floor leader." The caucus was never called, and Kitchin in the days to come, as head of the Ways and Means Committee, piloted through the House the biggest tax measures in the history of the country and served as patriotically as those who had voted for the war resolution. He sought to make the profiteers pay the cost of the war and did not always agree with the recommendation of Secretary McAdoo,



and with characteristic frankness differed over some means, but never over the raising of enough money for war purposes.

#### TREASURY DOUBTED KITCHIN'S COÖPERATION

At first the Treasury leaders felt that because Kitchin had voted against the war resolution he would balk at raising the revenue to carry it on. Doubting Kitchin's coöperation, McAdoo asked me to go with him to present the Treasury plans. I was glad to do so and we found Kitchin as concerned to obtain all the revenue needed as Wilson, who wrote him asking his aid. He needed no urging. He wanted the main cost of the war paid by those who profited from it. He opposed transferring most of the cost of war upon future generations by paying for the war by bond issues. During the conference McAdoo, who had the bad habit of interlarding his conversation, when he wished to be emphatic, with a number of "hells" and "damns," used these expletives to press his argument. Kitchin didn't like that and turned and asked me: "Have you learned to cuss since you became a member of the Cabinet?" I told Kitchin that Southerners who went to New York to live—like Walter Page and Bill McAdoo—said that in New York you had to use a "damn" to convince New Yorkers you were in earnest.

#### TRIES TO END TAX EXEMPT BONDS

When authorization of tax bond issues was approved, I suggested to Wilson that there should be omitted the usual provision that the bonds be exempt from taxation. He was interested and said, "See McAdoo and try to convince him to take that course." I did so and told McAdoo that under the impulse of patriotism the people would buy the bonds without the tax exemption provision. I stressed that to exempt bond-holders from taxation would build up a class free from bearing their part of the cost of the war. "But," McAdoo said, "the Treasury can float the bonds at a lower rate of interest and get more money if we put in the usual tax-exemption provision." I agreed, but said Uncle Sam could better afford to get less than to have a favorite class free from taxation. But I could not convince him of what Kitchin and I urged. Failing, Kitchin put through the measure as desired by the Treasury. That was the time to end tax-exempt bonds. When some Senators wished to favor big business, Robert Page wrote, "They seem utterly unable to get the viewpoint of the



MRS. WOODROW WILSON

From a portrait painted by A. Muller-Ury, soon after Mrs. Wilson went to the White House in 1916 (Brown Brothers).